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MONACO ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.

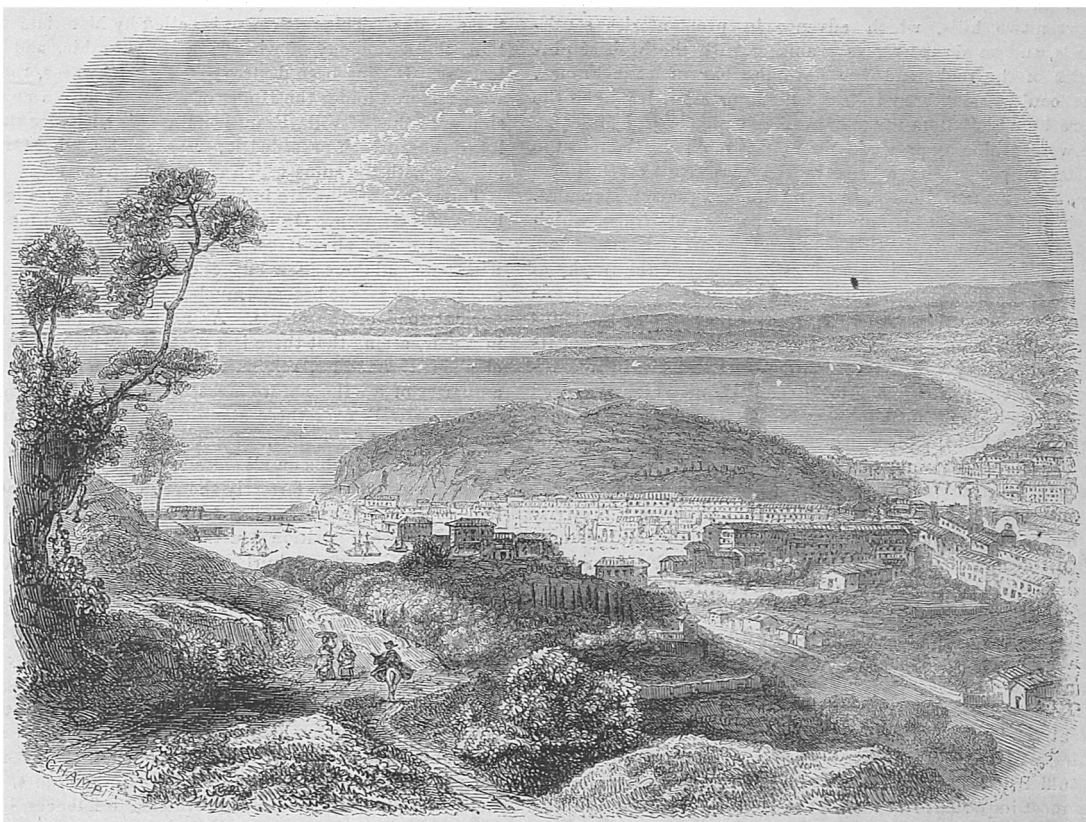
It has been remarked of certain names, as of certain countenances, that it is difficult to believe them to be in earnest. So it is with Monaco. While the name recalls the idea of monastic life, the bright country itself rather brings before us the jovial faces of our ancestors; and, perhaps, the best introduction to a description of it would be the famous burden of the song, "La Monaco."

Historically considered, Monaco is one of the most interesting places upon the Mediterranean. Upon this rock, now so little known, Greek civilisation was first planted in Europe. Ancient tradition relates that Hercules, before his return to Spain, landed here, and vanquishing the mountain robbers, opened a passage through the Alps, and consecrated to himself the rock and the natural port which distinguish it. "Monæci similiter arcem et portum ad perennem sui memoriam consecravit," says Ammianus Marcellinus ("He con-

the Monk. An heraldic device, still extant, represents a monk of noble form, as the god of strength, with short, thick beard, of fierce countenance, and sword in hand.

The most ancient mention of this singular transformation is to be found in the "Annals of Genoa," by Oggerius Panis; where, speaking of the rebuilding of the citadel, in the tenth century, after its destruction by the Saracens in the ninth, he simply calls it Podium Monachi, the manor of the monks. They appear to have forgotten Hercules, or only retained his surname, and the god was metamorphosed into a monk. Be that as it may, from the middle ages we date the name of Monaco, or the substitution of the idea of a cell for the more poetic one of the solitary Hercules.

Monaco and Nice are separated by a barrier of mountains, which must be scaled, for as they descend perpendicularly to the sea, there is no passage at their base. For the pedestrian



VIEW OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BETWEEN NICE AND MONACO.

secrated both the citadel and the port to a lasting remembrance of himself"). Hence, down to the first ages of Christianity the port of Monaco retained the glorious name of Portus Herculis. This is a settlement much more ancient than those made by the Greeks and Romans on this shore, for it belongs to the mythological period. Even five hundred years before the Christian era, Hecateus of Miletus made mention of Monaco as a celebrated colony.

Its great antiquity is especially proved by the etymology of its name. As this colony, or rather this monument of the first navigators, dedicated by its founders to Hercules, formed an isolated point on the wild shore, the god received from it the surname of Monoikos (isolated habitation), of which the Latins made Monæcus. Hence the city was called Portus Herculis Monæci, or Portus Monæci. Thus the guardian divinity of the place was Hercules the Solitary, or Hercules

the journey from one town to the other hardly occupies four hours, while by carriage it is nearly two hours longer, from the circuitous route necessary to avoid the ruggedness of the declivity. Between the two modes one could not long remain undecided; for, by Hercules! who would choose to travel otherwise than did the god himself to whom we go to pay tribute? Apollo has his horses; Diana her hinds; Amphitrite has her dolphins; Venus her doves; the swift Mercury his winged sandals; but Hercules, who traversed the world, receives nothing from the poets but the strength of his limbs.

On leaving the city, you at once ascend the massive barrier between Nice and Monaco, which forms a most valuable natural shelter to this part of the world, so renowned for the delightful mildness of its winters. The ascent commences through a grove of olive trees, and between their light foliage

the eye roams over one of the most smiling, happy prospects in the world. The plain covered with gardens of orange-trees, diversified here and there by black pyramids of cypress, and the stately palm-tree. The hills rise one above another, covered with olive-trees and terraces to their summits. Around the picturesque rock, upon which formerly stood the castle, but now stand only the ruins, the city lies in the form of a horse-shoe, its two extremities abutting upon the sea; and its circumference so thickly studded with houses extending into the country, that it loses itself, so to speak, in this wondrous valley, which is terminated on the north by the jagged and snowy tops of the maritime Alps, and on the south by the azure gulf, which is bordered throughout its whole extent by a fringe of white spray.

After half an hour's walk, this magnificent spectacle suddenly vanishes by a turn in the heights, and you must say "adieu!" until you see it again from a greater altitude. You then reach the summit of the rock which separates Nice from Villa-Franca, looking down almost perpendicularly upon the latter town and its glorious bay. Imagine a basin about two miles in length, and a third of a mile in breadth, situate between two hills, which advance in promontories southwards, and an abrupt recess reuniting with the highest pinnacles of the rock, and you have the bay of Villa-Franca. One could easily fancy it to be the impression left upon the shore by a blow from the club of the demigod; and, if learning were guided by poetic instincts, this might be thought the reason why some have endeavoured to prove that this fine bay, rather than Monaco, was the ancient port of Hercules. Their chief argument is founded on a passage of Strabo, who seems to imply a distinction between the port of Hercules and the port of Monœcus, inasmuch as it speaks of the trophy of Augustus as placed between the two; but the passage reads differently in different manuscripts, and that from Ammianus Marcellinus, which has been cited literally on account of its importance, leaves little room to doubt that it is in accordance with other evidence into the details of which we need not enter at length. Perhaps the most conclusive evidence may be found in the places themselves. In proportion as the rock of Monaco, rising from the sea, would appear eligible for the seat of a colony in so isolated a condition, to the same extent would the situation of Villa-Franca, upon a declivity which might be swept away, so to speak, by rolling stones down the mountain, appear unfavourable; and although the roadstead of Villa-Franca would afford admirable anchorage for a squadron, and even for a fleet, we must not forget that the ancient ideas of navigation, so different from our own, would find every convenience in the more confined port of Monaco.

Hence, after a careful consideration of the subject, and an attentive observation of the locality, we have no hesitation in siding with those who deny this bay so great an antiquity. It is sufficient for the roadstead of Villa-Franca to form one of the most important features of the Mediterranean, and to take rank, if not as a rival, at least as an accessory to that of Toulon. We do not mean to assert that the Greek colony of Marseilles may not have had a settlement there; but the Phœceans, who founded that colony, had no occasion for the assistance of Hercules to enable them to discover and appreciate so remarkable a position. After being destroyed by the barbarians, and afterwards by the Saracens, it was not until the end of the eleventh century that the city could again raise its head. The castle, which still overlooks the city and the bay, historically dates from the end of the tenth century; but the primitive structure has yielded to the more modern, and it now consists of a bastioned fort, retaining, however, its rude and picturesque appearance. The town, which enjoyed great commercial prosperity under the House of Anjou, who changed its primitive name, "Port of the Olive," for that of *Ciutat Franca*—in French, *Villefranche*—is now little more than a large village, commerce having found a better home at Nice.

The promontory which forms the eastern boundary of the bay of Villa-Franca is connected with a second promontory

still more rugged, which, diverging at right angles from the former, has an extraordinary appearance. It is called the peninsula of Saint Hospice, covered, except at its head, with a magnificent grove of olive-trees; it is chiefly remarkable for its lighthouse, which, with that of Antibes, warns the mariner of this dangerous coast. Ruins appear in this desert landscape, and heighten the contrast between it and the fertile plain of Nice. Here in the primitive ages of Christianity stood a monastery of Benedictines, connected with that of Lérins, which is still to be seen in the distance. It was destroyed by the Lombards in the sixth century, and there remained only a tower, in which the Abbé Hospitius, who alone escaped being massacred like his brethren, secluded himself during the remainder of his life. The renown of his austerities, and his lamentations, struck the lively imagination of the people, and the gulf from hence took the name of *Sant-Souspir*. Nothing now remains of this remote period but the ruins of a chapel, which are still held in veneration by the fishermen.

Many ruins of a later date are heaped around. Upon their site the Saracens founded a maritime settlement, which they long maintained, to the injury of the commercial interests of these shores. This settlement is called by historians *Fraxinetum*, the etymology of which is purely Arabic, and signifies fortress. Having been destroyed by the Genoese, these ruins were restored under the House of Anjou to form a new citadel similar to that of Villa-Franca. But this structure shared the lot of those which preceded it; raised in 1692 by Catinat, it mingles with the ruins which cover this spot.

The scenes around are in harmony with these vestiges of the barbarous Saracen. On leaving Villa-Franca, the mountain is stripped of its olive-trees. The rough, barren rock appears, with here and there a few bushes of myrtle, some cactuses, and aloes. The ascent becomes much more rugged; for this is the ancient road of the giants. As no pains are taken to keep it in repair, seeing that there is a post-road which, by a winding of about three miles, rejoins this road at an altitude of about a quarter of a mile, nature is fast reclaiming her own. After an hour's walk over these stony declivities, we come upon a true city of Africa, *Esa*. Built on the summit of a rocky pyramid, inaccessible on all sides except by a narrow path cut in the rock, this was formerly the principal Saracen station on this coast. With such means of attack as the middle ages afforded, such a position must have been impregnable except by famine. A stone hurled from the platform would roll violently down to the waves which, sixteen hundred feet below, wash the foot of the cliff. It is enough to make one giddy to look down into the abyss. There is also a complete desert all round the mountain. This ancient city, reduced now to the insignificance of a most miserable village, is the only habitable spot between Villa-Franca and the other extremity of the rocky height. From this extreme seclusion and unfavourableness of natural position, there results a certain savageness of disposition in the inhabitants, which is now, indeed, daily yielding to civilising influences, but before the opening of the new road rendered the brigands of *Esa* almost as notorious and as formidable as the pirates formerly were.

This part of the route from Genoa, of which we give a view (p. 49), is, perhaps, the finest. The rugged canton of *Esa* occupies only a small space in the view. On turning to review the road traversed from Nice, the principal points are again discerned, while the horizon spreads out beyond. A portion of France is seen before you, and no less than half a dozen gulfs are visible. First, the peninsula of Saint-Hospice, and the bay of Villa-Franca; then the town of Nice in a semicircle round its monumental rock; the mouths of the Var, and the long peninsula of Garoupe, at the base of which Antibes and its fortress stand out clearly; behind, the gulf of Juan, celebrated for the disembarkation of Napoleon; the island *Sainte Marguerite*; the gulf of Napoul, washing the charming town of Cannes; above, the porphyry chain of Esterel; below, the gulf of Grimaud, bordering on the town of Saint Tropez, which is bounded by the granite chain of Mavres, still bearing the name of the barbarians who were

so long in possession of it; the most prominent point, Cap Camard, covering the island of Hyères.

On the Italian side, the view is as limited as it is extended towards France. The mountain which rises above Monaco eclipses the less elevated regions beyond it. In the pass between the top of this mountain and the jagged crests beyond, are found the remains of the gigantic monument erected by Augustus to commemorate his victory over the people of these countries; and from thence you descend upon Italy. And now where are you? Are you still in France, or are you already in Italy? It is easy to reply, with a geographical treatise in hand, which indicates as a frontier line the bed of the rivulet, lost in the sands, called the river Var. But comparing a chart of the Republic with one of the Empire, we see that the Var is one of those undetermined frontiers which change with every treaty, and not one of those immutable boundaries such as the Rhine or the Alps. To turn to history, where did Gaul commence under the Romans? The Itinerary of Antonius leaves no doubt on the subject. Between Cemenelo (now Cimies) and Lumone (now Menton) the geographer mentions, by the name of *Alpes summa*, an intermediate station, which, reckoning according to the distances, coincides with the village of Turbie; and on the mention of this station he adds: "Usque huc Italia, hinc Gallia" ("Up to this point is Italy, beyond it is Gaul").

The acts of St. Pons, the first apostle of Nice, leave no doubt that in the first ages of Christianity this decision was always respected. "Passing beyond the frontiers of Italy he reached a town, situated far from the crest of the Alps, named Cimella." This is the same village, Turbie, which formed the separation between Provence and Liguria in the middle ages; as it appears, in a treaty of 1125, between the Count of Toulouse and the Count of Barcelona: "Ipse mons per fines Italiæ descendit ad ipsam Turbiam in mare" ("The mountain forming the frontiers of Italy descends at Turbie to the sea"). It may be added, that the monument erected by Augustus on this spot forms a strong proof that Turbie was a boundary point between Italy and Gaul. Pompey had raised one of the kind upon the crest of the Pyrenees on the limits of Spain and Gaul. Augustus, who, after having imitated this great general in his war against an independent people, wished to imitate him in his glory, would be likely to erect his trophy on the limits of Gaul and Italy.

To conclude with a proof more appropriate to the traveller: in a kind of inn, near Esa, whither a French writer had been driven by the heat of the road, he heard nothing spoken around him but French and Provençal; and the hostess, whom he questioned, knew no more of Italian than is known at Quimper Corentin. "It is below, beyond the mountains," said she, "that they speak that language."

SCARRON'S "COMIC ROMANCE."

As one of the French writers who contributed, in some measure, to the formation of that clear and lively style of composition which Pascal, Voltaire, and Lesage carried to such a high degree of perfection, Paul Scarron deserves honourable mention. He was born at Paris in the year 1610, and was intended for the church—indeed a canonry at Mans was actually obtained for him; but having been stricken with the palsy, and thus deprived of the use of his limbs, at the age of twenty-six, he was compelled to forego all prospects of clerical distinction. In spite, however, of this drawback, he managed, by his brilliant talents, to win for his father the favour of Cardinal Richelieu—who was the means of procuring him a handsome pension from the crown, though he had previously been offended with him—and to obtain for himself the hand of the witty and beautiful Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, whose splendid accomplishments, combined with his own, attracted around them all the *élite* of that period, and whom he left a widow in the year 1660. She afterwards became more remarkable under the name of Madame de Maintenon.

Of all Scarron's works, the "Comic Romance" is certainly the most distinguished. Even Boileau, who said to Racine the younger, "Your father sometimes was weak enough to read Scarron's verses, but he took care to conceal it from me"—even Boileau himself saw some merit in this work. And, indeed, there are in it, notwithstanding its frequent traits of burlesque, many proofs of observation, well-drawn portraits, and a certain lively and natural eloquence rarely found in the prose writers who preceded Scarron. Besides its other merits, it is noticeable as the first serious attempt at a portraiture of manners in fiction. Previous writers of romance had confined themselves to great adventures, fabulous passions, and feats of gallantry. Every one is familiar with those strange recitals in ten or twenty volumes, in which the greatest men of antiquity were transformed into courtiers and gentlemen of the time of the magnificent Louis Quatorze. The "Comic Romance" of Scarron tended to counteract this ridiculous species of literature, much in the same way as Cervantes' "Don Quixote" had the books of chivalry. Thus, in spite of the vast difference between the Spanish and the French writers, Scarron has the honour of having contributed in his measure to render the cause of good sense and truth predominant.

It must not, however, be supposed that the work of Scarron is completely free from all tinge of romance. A Spanish influence is perceptible in the sentimental details with which

the author has interspersed his narrative, as Lesage himself did afterwards in his "Gil Blas." These false ornaments, stuck rather awkwardly in the comic story, are evidently a concession to the vitiated taste of the time. Obligated to intermingle recitals of lofty gallantry with his public-house adventures, the author has some trouble to preserve a serious tone, and sometimes heedlessly abandons himself to satirical sallies.

Stripping the "Comic Romance" of useless episodes, we find that it consists mainly of the adventures of a set of country players, roaming about from place to place to obtain a precarious subsistence. Our engraving (p. 52) represents the arrival of a part of the company in the town of Mans. To give the reader a better insight into its meaning, we will here quote from Scarron the passage which our artist has rather freely rendered.

"The sun had accomplished more than half his journey, and his chariot, having reached the descent in the heavens, was rolling along more quickly than he liked. Had his horses chosen to take advantage of the downward tendency of the road, they would have completed what remained of the day in less than half a quarter of an hour; but instead of pulling with all their force, they amused themselves by curvetting and snuffing up the briny air, which made them neigh, and warned them of their approach to the ocean, in which their master is said to rest every night. Humanly and more intelligibly speaking, it was between five and six in the afternoon, when a cart entered the market-place of Mans. This vehicle was drawn by two very lean oxen, headed by a mare, whose foal kept running round the cart like a silly creature as it was. The cart was full of boxes, trunks, large packages, and painted coverings, which formed a complete pyramid, on the top of which sat a young woman, dressed half in city and half in country fashion. A young man, as poor in clothes as he was plump in the face, was walking by the side of the cart. He had a great plaster on his face, which covered one eye and half the cheek; and carried on his shoulder a large gun, with which he had killed several magpies, jays, and ravens, that formed a sort of belt, from beneath which peeped out the feet of a fowl and a gosling, which looked very much as if they had fallen a prey to this kind of warfare. Instead of a hat, he had nothing but a nightcap, twisted round with garters of various colours, forming a sort of turban in the rough. He had on a gray doublet, with a strap, to which was fastened his long